

Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Iranian National Extradited to the Western District of Texas for Illegally Exporting Military Sensitive Items from the U.S. to Iran

On Saturday, 38-year-old Merdad Ansari who is an Iranian citizen and a resident of the United Arab Emirates was extradited from Georgia and arrived Saturday evening in San Antonio to face federal charges in connection with a scheme to obtain military sensitive parts for Iran in violation of the Iranian Trade Embargo, announced Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers, U.S. Attorney John F. Bash for the Western District of Texas; FBI San Antonio Division Special Agent in Charge Christopher Combs; Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) San Antonio Office Special Agent in Charge Shane Folden; Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS) Southwest Field Office Special Agent in Charge Michael Mentalvos; and, Special Agent in Charge Tracy Martin, U.S. Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security's Office of Export Enforcement, Dallas Field Office.

These parts had dual-use military and civilian capability and could be used in such systems as: nuclear weapons, missile guidance and development, secure tactical radio communications, offensive electronic warfare, military electronic countermeasures (radio jamming), and radar warning and surveillance systems.

"As alleged, the defendant helped Iran to develop its weapons programs by obtaining military parts in violation of the Iranian Trade Embargo," said Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers. "We are grateful for the work our partners have done to ensure Ansari can be brought to justice."

"I am pleased that Mr. Ansari will face justice in an American courtroom. I am grateful to the many law-enforcement partners who worked so diligently to make that happen," stated U. S. Attorney John F. Bash for the Western District of Texas.

"The FBI greatly appreciates the collaborative efforts and unwavering support from the Georgian Government and our federal partners. Together, over several years, we relentlessly pursued every lead to ensure that Ansari would eventually face the charges detailed in the indictment," stated FBI San Antonio Division Special Agent in Charge Christopher Combs. "Investigating criminal violations of U.S. trade embargoes is one of the FBI's highest priorities since this criminal activity affects the national security of the United States and our allies, especially the security of our troops abroad."

"HSI will use all resources at its disposal to prevent sensitive technology from being illegally exported from the United States," said Shane Folden, Special Agent in Charge, HSI San Antonio. "HSI commends all the agencies involved in this effort, their dedication and perseverance has brought this individual before the court to face justice."

Ansari, and his co-defendant Mehrdad Foomanie (aka Frank Foomanie) of Iran, are charged in a federal grand jury indictment returned in June 2012 with conspiracy to violate the Iranian Transactions Regulations (ITR), conspiracy to launder money and conspiracy to commit wire fraud. Foomanie remains a fugitive in this case. In October 2012, a third co-defendant, Susan Yip (aka Susan Yeh), a citizen of Taiwan, was sentenced to two years in federal prison after pleading guilty to conspiring to violate the ITR by acting as a broker and conduit for Foomanie to buy items in the U.S. and have them unlawfully shipped to Iran.

According to the indictment, Foomanie also bought or attempted to buy items in the U.S. and arranged to have them unlawfully shipped to Iran through his companies in Iran (Morvarid Shargh Co. Ltd.); in Hong Kong (Panda Semiconductor and Foang Tech Inc., aka Ofogh Electronics Co.); and, in China (Ninehead Bird Semiconductor). The indictment also alleges that Ansari attempted to transship and transshipped cargo obtained from the U.S. by Yip and Foomanie using Ansari's company, Gulf Gate Sea Cargo L.L.C., located in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. In her guilty plea, Yip admitted to primarily using her companies in Taiwan (Hivocal Technology Company, Ltd.; Enrich Ever Technologies Co., Ltd.; and, Kuang-Su Corporation) and in Hong Kong (Infinity Wise Technology; Well Smart (HK) Technology; Pinky Trading Co., Ltd.; and, Wise Smart (HK) Electronics Limited) to carry out the fraudulent scheme.

From Oct. 9, 2007, to June 15, 2011, the defendants obtained or attempted to obtain from companies worldwide over 105,000 parts valued at approximately \$2,630,800 involving more than 1,250 transactions. The defendants conducted 599 transactions with 63 different U.S. companies where they obtained or attempted to obtain parts from U.S. companies without notifying the U.S. companies these parts were being shipped to Iran or getting the required U.S. Government license to ship these parts to Iran.

At no time did Yip, Foomanie, or Ansari, individually or through any of their companies, ever apply for or receive either a required U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) license or Department of Commerce export license to ship any item listed in this Indictment to the Republic of Iran.

The Iranian Transactions Regulations, renamed the Iranian Transactions and Sanctions Regulations in October 2012, prohibit, among other things, the exportation, re-exportation, sale or supply, directly or indirectly, to Iran or the Government of Iran, of any goods, technology or services from the U.S. or by a U.S. person. The embargo also prohibits any transaction by any U.S. person or within the U.S. that evades or avoids, or has the purpose of evading or avoiding, any prohibition set forth in the Executive Orders.

Upon conviction, Foomanie and Ansari faces up to 20 years in federal prison for conspiracy to violate the ITR, up to 20 years in federal prison for conspiracy to launder money and up to five years in federal prison for conspiracy to commit mail fraud.

It is important to note that an indictment is merely a charge and should not be considered as evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

The extradition occurred with substantial assistance from the Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs and the Government of Georgia.

Topic(s):

Counterintelligence and Export Control

National Security

Component(s):

[National Security Division \(NSD\)](#)

[USAO - Texas, Western](#)